

Obituary: Richard Lynn (1930-2023)

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Richard Lynn, who died on 17th July 2023 at the age of 93 at his home in Failand near Bristol, may well rank as one of Britain's most controversial psychologists. Towards the end of his working life, Lynn gained the courage to move into the most incendiary, though fascinating and important, of areas; most obviously national and racial differences in average IQ (Lynn, 2006; Lynn & Vanhanen, 2002), but also sex differences in average IQ (Lynn, 2021), Jewish high intelligence (Lynn, 2011), and even racial differences in psychopathic personality (Lynn, 2019). Lynn also discovered the Flynn Effect, as Jim Flynn himself acknowledged (Flynn, 2013), such that some researchers call it the 'Lynn-Flynn Effect' (Kanazawa, 2012, p. 188) or the 'FLynn Effect' (Rindermann, 2018, p. 85). To his detractors, Lynn was a 'pseudo-scientist,' a term which seems to mean that he presented scientific results that challenged left-wing dogmas. To genuine scientists, Lynn fearlessly pursued the truth about group differences and stoically suffered the consequences. Lynn was still writing in his 90s, with his last book, *Sex Differences in Intelligence: The Developmental Theory* (Lynn, 2021), appearing in 2021, and his edited festschrift to Helmuth Nyborg (Lynn, 2023) appearing in 2023.

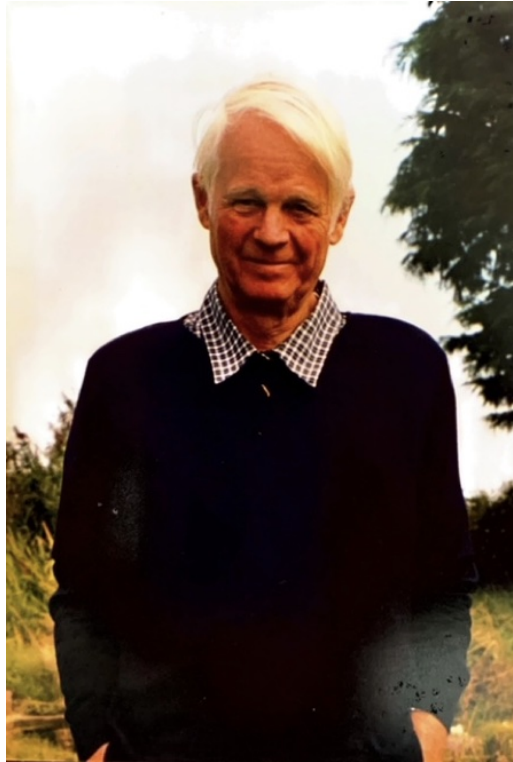
Richard Lynn had an unusual start in life. He was born in Hampstead in London on 20th February 1930, the son of Mrs. Ann Lynn (1905-1964), née Freeman, and Mr. Richard Lynn, who had died during the pregnancy; except, this wasn't the case at all. In reality, Richard Lynn's maternal grandfather, William Freeman (1874-1949), a botanist, was Director of Agriculture in the British colony of Trinidad, with Ann working there as his housekeeper. There Ann got to know Lynn's father, the geneticist Sydney Cross Harland (1891-1982), who was working on the genetics of cotton and was later Professor of Botany at Manchester University. They began a romantic relationship, which they could not easily conceal in the incestuous world of British expatriates; Cross Harland being a married man, albeit estranged from his wife. So they moved to New York together, where Richard Lynn was accidentally conceived. To avoid any scandal, they bigamously married, with Cross Harland pretending to be a mining engineer called 'Richard Lynn'. Ann then returned to England as the widowed Mrs Lynn, moved in with her parents, gave birth and named the son after his 'father'.

Lynn lived in Hampstead until he was about 5, when he moved to Croydon in south London because his mother had got a job there. In his autobiography, *Memoirs of a Dissent Psychologist*, Lynn (2020) recalls that he could not yet read when he started primary school, because his mother had never taught him and had little interest in his academic achievement more broadly. Lynn assumed her to be of average IQ and to be an extreme example of regression to the mean. It was her parents who, as a child, were far more involved in Lynn's intellectual development. Ann's mother was a science graduate and an exhibited artist. Ann's father, as well as being a botanist, was a keen bridge player. He taught Lynn bridge and Lynn maintained a passion for it throughout his life, it being his main hobby.

In 1939, during the so-called 'Phoney War', Lynn went to live with his mother's friends in the Lake District, where he remained until 1943, increasingly aware of his mother's relatively low social and educational status compared to the family with whom he resided. Ann moved to Bristol, to escape Germany's bombing of London, and Lynn joined her there, determined to obtain a 'good education', as he wrote in his memoirs, and thus to get a place at Bristol Grammar School, which he duly did, though only just about passing the entrance exam.

Lynn's mother was a republican and a Communist and, under her influence, Lynn joined the Young Communist League when he was 14, attending its summer camps. When Lynn was 16, his maternal grandmother told him who his real father was. It turned out his mother was actually friends with Lynn's half-sister who was a junior doctor in Bristol. Working hard in the Sixth Form, Lynn won a scholarship

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to King's College, Cambridge, but beginning his degree was delayed by compulsory military service during which he became an officer cadet and, eventually, a Second Lieutenant.

Lynn was at Cambridge University between 1949 and 1956, as an undergraduate and then as a PhD student. Lynn initially studied History, before switching to Psychology in his second year. At the time, the university was overwhelmingly male and Lynn got to know eminent novelist E.M. Forster (1879-1970) who was a don at his college. In 1950, Lynn first met his father, who took him for dinner in Cambridge. Ultimately, Lynn won the Passingham Prize for the best undergraduate degree marks in his subject. On this basis he was awarded a PhD scholarship, choosing to focus on the relationship between anxiety, intelligence and educational attainment in schools.

Between 1956 and 1967, Lynn lectured in psychology at Exeter University, beginning to collaborate with leading figures in the field, including Hans Eysenck (1916-1997). There, in 1963, Lynn was fired as the warden of a hall of residence because the drains were blocked-up with condoms, implying that Lynn had a lax attitude to his students entering single-sex halls and having sex. Lynn told a journalist, having been fired, that he thought students' sex lives were none of a warden's business. The result was a mini-national scandal in the newspapers at the time: 'Girls in Rooms, I Don't Mind Says Blind-Eyed Don.'

Between 1967 and 1972, Lynn worked at the Economic and Social Research Institute in Dublin, making policy proposals to improve economic life in the Republic of Ireland. This work included addressing the Irish brain drain to the UK and meeting leading Irish statesmen. There he attacked progressive schools and defended the English public school system ([Daily Mirror, 1969, 8th October](#)) and was in the newspapers for his research finding that the British were very low in anxiety potentially making them lazier than more anxious peoples ([Coventry Telegraph, 1969, 9th September](#)). Then, in 1972, Lynn was appointed to found the Psychology Department at the new University of Ulster at Coleraine, where he was its first Professor of Psychology. Lynn continued in this position until he retired in 1995.

It was during Lynn's later years at the University of Ulster that he began to dare to explore the areas that have made him so infamous to the enemies of science. Already in 1976, Lynn was writing on why average IQ was lower in Ireland than in Britain (not thinking it wise to discuss this while he was still in Dublin). He was exploring why Japanese IQ was higher than European IQ by 1977, genes for ethnocentrism by 1989, and race differences in intelligence by 1991. He turned to sex differences in intelligence in 1992, dysgenics (in a letter to *The Times*) in 1994, and sex differences in IQ and brain size in the same year

(see [Lynn 2020](#), 'Publications'). In 1996, Lynn published his book *Dysgenics: Genetic Deterioration in Modern Populations* ([Lynn, 1996](#)), followed by *Eugenics: A Reassessment* in 2001, in which Lynn cautiously defended eugenics ([Lynn, 2001](#)).

These publications did not go unnoticed. In 1978, academics went to the papers to condemn Lynn's research on how and why Scottish IQ was lower than English IQ ([Aberdeen Evening Express, 1978](#), 18th January). In 1991, the Anti-Nazi League (now known, amusingly, as 'Hope Not Hate') disrupted Lynn's lectures and put up posters around the campus demanding the university 'Sack Racist Lynn'. In 1995, Lynn was even investigated by the Royal Ulster Constabulary after allegations from these activists that he had made comments 'likely to incite racial hatred' ([Sunday Life, 1995](#), 21st May), though he was never prosecuted. In 1996, Lynn was all over the UK newspapers for reporting his research that women were less intelligent than men because they had smaller brains ([Irish Independent, 1996](#), 10th May), and for linking the 'degenerate underclass' to dysgenics ([Scotsman, 1996](#), 23rd of December). In 1993, he caused a minor stir by defending the smacking of children ([Newcastle Journal, 1993](#), 7th July) and in 1990, when he called for the abolition of GCSEs, the English school leaving certificate at the time ([Liverpool Echo, 1990](#), 20th September).

In retirement, Lynn continued with a prolific output, publishing numerous papers and many books on these 'controversial' subjects including IQ and the Wealth of Nations with Finnish political scientist Tatu Vanhanen (1929-2015) in 2002. Lynn also ran the Ulster Institute for Social Research, which provided funding for the kind of research that is increasingly excluded by doctrinaire mainstream academia.

As society moved ever leftwards, and became ever more hostile to science that questioned leftist dogmas, Lynn was increasingly attacked. In 2018, he was stripped of his emeritus professorship at the University of Ulster, in the wake of a minor 'moral panic' over the London Conference on Intelligence ([BBC News, 2018](#), 14th April). This conference had occurred at University College London since 2015 and was reported by the media as a 'secret eugenics conference', even though the main organizer publically advertised it ([Woodley of Menie et al., 2018](#)). Lynn was also removed from, or pressured to resign from, the editorial boards of a number of journals which he had helped to establish. Though mentally fit to the end, he started to make some mistakes, which the enemies of science leapt upon with glee, naturally never giving him the benefit of the doubt (see [Dutton 2023](#), 16th August). Lynn published frequently in *Mankind Quarterly* and acted as its nominal editor from 2020 until his death.

In terms of Lynn's personal life, in 1950, on a trip to Spain organized by a Cambridge University student, he met Susan Maher (b. 1930), who was also studying History at Cambridge. They got married in 1956 and had three children: Emma (b. 1957), a textile designer; Sophie (b. 1960), who worked in fashion retail, and Matthew (b. 1962), a financial journalist, including for the *Daily Telegraph*. These children, together, gave Lynn 9 grandchildren. When Lynn moved to Ulster, it was decided that the children should stay in London with their mother. Lynn and Susan grew apart across this period and they decided to divorce in 1978.

In 1990, in Malvern, Lynn married Susan Hampson (1944-1998), whom Lynn had appointed his research assistant at the University of Ulster in 1972 and with whom Lynn had already published a number of academic articles. She had also worked at the Economic and Social Research Institute, between 1968 and 1972. They had no children. She died, tragically young, of kidney failure, already having been in a wheelchair for two years due to Still's Disease, a very serious form of arthritis. In his memoirs, Lynn wrote that 'Susan's death was one of the two most traumatic experiences of my life and from which I took a long time to recover. Our years together had been a time of great happiness.' Lynn also wrote of his intellectual debt to her: "She insisted on reading everything I wrote and struck out passages of which she disapproved, saying 'I'm not allowing this.' It was during these years that with her help I made many of my contributions to intelligence."

Now widowed, Lynn moved to Herefordshire in 1999, to be closer to his daughter Emma and her family, and then back to the Bristol area in 2001. In 2002, Lynn met Joyce Walters, the widow of an American Lieutenant Colonel and herself the retired headmistress of the girls' public school St Mary's, Calne, in Wiltshire. They married in 2004 in Wraxall in Somerset with the psychologist J. Philippe Rushton (1943-2012) acting as Lynn's best man. Lynn is survived by his first wife, his widow, his three children, and

his nine grandchildren.

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